

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

At the top of page 1, please amend the title as follows:

SLICER CARRIAGE TRACKING ARRANGEMENT AND
~~ASSOCIATED METHOD OF CONTROLLING FOOD PRODUCT CARRIAGE~~

At page 3, immediately preceding the DETAILED DESCRIPTION heading on line 6, please insert the following sentence:

Fig. 11 illustrates another embodiment of an encoder system.

At page 12, please amend the first paragraph to read as follows:

Although the foregoing description references details in accordance with the illustrated embodiment, it is recognized and anticipated that various changes and modifications could be made. For example, while the illustrated embodiment provides a light source and photo-detector arranged in a fixed position and a mask element arranged to move with the pivot link, as an alternative the mask element could instead be arranged in a fixed position and the light source and photo-detector could be arranged to move with the pivot link. Further, while the illustrated embodiment provides a mask element in which the windows or window regions are openings through the element and the light source and photo-detector are positioned on opposite sides of the mask element respectively, as an alternative the window regions of the mask element could instead be formed as reflective or non-reflective areas of the mask element and the light source and photo-detector could both be positioned on the same side of the mask element. Still further, while a curved mask element is shown in the illustrated embodiment, it is recognized that a non-curved mask element could be used in some cases. For example, a mask element formed with one or more bends therein might be used. A linear mask element might be used if the spacing between the light source on one side of the element and the photo-detector on an opposite side of the mask element is sufficient or, in the case of the reflective arrangement just noted above, the light source and photo-detector are capable of proper interaction with the window regions of the

mask element. As another example, a system having a linear mask element could be provided where either the linear mask element or the opto-switch slides back and forth along the length of the pivot link in a reciprocal manner during pivot could be provided, or where the linear mask element or the opto-switch is configured to pivot its orientation relative to the pivot axis as the pivot axis pivots back and forth, or where the optical elements utilized are of a type which allows them to work effectively both when spaced close to the mask element and when spaced away from the mask element. Still further, while the use of an optical encoder arrangement is described and preferred, it is recognized that other encoder arrangements could be used such as Hall effect type encoder arrangements (such as the encoder arrangement show schematically in Fig. 11 using linear member 300 and Hall effect sensor unit 302).